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Letter No. 2209

April 18, 1985

**EXPORT VALUES
FALL...VOLUME
INCREASES**

U.S. agricultural export values fell 6 pct. below year-earlier levels to \$16 billion during the first 5 months of fiscal 1985, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. However, a 3.9 million-ton increase in coarse grain exports pushed volume over year-earlier levels. Despite the volume increase, lower prices for most commodities kept total export values down. (For more information, call Tom Warden at 202-447-4863.)

**FARM EXPORTS
SLUGGISH**

U.S. exports of wheat in February were the smallest since the January 1980 announcement of the Soviet grain embargo, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Earlier forecasts of a U.S. wheat export season as high as 1 billion, 58 million bushels were recently scaled back to 1 billion, 45 million. U.S. coarse grain sales for 1984/85 are forecast at nearly 59 million tons, up 3 million from last season. The U.S. share of the world coarse grain market is likely to fall from 61 to 58 pct. The U.S. share of the corn export market led this decline, falling from 78 to 74 pct. (For more information, call Keith Searce or Herb Moses at 202-447-8378.)

**IOWA LEADS IN
EXPORTS**

Iowa moved ahead of Illinois as the leading agricultural export state in fiscal 1984, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture economist Tom Warden. This was due largely to the 1983 drought, which severely reduced soybean yields in 25 of the 29 producing states. Agricultural export contributions of most states increased during 1984. Other top-ten exporters were California, Nebraska, Texas, Kansas, Minnesota, Indiana, North Dakota and Ohio. (Warden's phone number is 202-447-4863.)

OILSEEDS

The April world oilseed production forecast for 1984/85 increased slightly from last month's report, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The increases were for rapeseed, sunflowerseed, soybeans, and palm kernels. Only peanut production decreased. The U.S. 1984/85 season average price forecast for soybeans narrowed to \$5.80-\$6.00 per bushel with no change in the midpoint. The soybeans meal price estimated declined slightly to a range of \$1.25-\$1.32. Soybean oil price range was narrowed to 29-31 cents from 27-31 cents per pound. (For more information, call 202-382-8231.)

**A NEW
SUPER SPUD?**

A superior, disease-resistant potato may result from fusing single cells from wild and domestic potato plants, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Cell fusion bypasses obstacles that thwarted efforts of breeders to cross many potato plants.

WHEAT
REFERENDUM
JULY 19-26

Sec'y of Agriculture John Block announced on April 12 a 1986 national wheat marketing quota of 1 billion, 955 million bushels and a national acreage allotment of 54 million acres. Said Block, "All states will be considered commercial wheat-producing areas for the 1986-crop of wheat. A producer referendum will be conducted July 19-26, 1985 to determine whether farmers favor or oppose marketing quotas for the 1986 wheat crop." To become effective, marketing quotas must be approved by two-thirds or more of the eligible producers voting in a referendum held not later than August 1, 1985.

EC SUBSIDIES

The European Community Commission has reduced the export subsidies for canned hams and shoulders and for fresh, chilled or frozen pork to the United States and Canada for the second time this year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The subsidy for hams is now the equivalent of \$110 per ton, down from the previous level of \$255. The new subsidy for shoulders is \$103 per ton, down from \$235. The new subsidies for fresh, chilled or frozen pork are about \$97-\$110 per ton, down from \$193-\$207.

MID. EAST &
NO. AF. FOOD
IMPORTS

Total agricultural imports by the Middle East and North Africa region increased 6.5 percent in 1984, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The U.S. shipped a record \$3.7 billion, up 20 pct., putting the U.S. share of this \$31.5-billion market at 11.6 pct. U.S. blended credit played an important role for some countries. The U.S. enjoyed a \$4-billion trade surplus with the region, a vast improvement over its \$20-billion deficit in 1980.

WORLD COTTON
SITUATION

World cotton production is estimated at record 84.2 million bales, down slightly from last month's estimate but 24 pct. higher than the 1983/84 crop, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The U.S. crop is currently estimated at 13 million bales, down 2 pct. from last month due to late season rains which reduced output in Texas and adversely impacted quality in the Delta. Foreign output is projected at a record 71.3 million bales, 19 pct. above last year. (For more information, call 202-382-9494.)

COTTON
PROGRAM

U.S. cotton farmers have enrolled 83 pct. of their base acreage in the 1985 cotton program, up from 71 pct. in 1984, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture economist, Terry Townsend. Higher participation reflects increased supplies and lower prices this year, along with the outlook for continuing large supplies in relation to demand. Unless there is a crop failure in a major competing country, world supplies will remain large and the U.S. share of trade may slip further. Mill use of cotton is forecast at 5.3 million bales in 1984/85, down 600,000 from last season. Competition from textile imports and slow growth in retail sales are responsible. (Townsend's phone number is 202-447-8444.)

WHEAT TO
ISRAEL

U.S. wheat export commitments to Israel in the current wheat marketing year are approaching 600,000 tons, about 40 pct. above last year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For the second year in a row, Israel is experiencing a drought-reduced wheat crop. As a result, U.S. wheat exports to Israel could be near record levels.

FROM OUR
TELEVISION
SERVICE

"Cotton And Wool Outlook"...U.S. cotton farmers have enrolled 83 percent of their base acreage in the 1985 cotton program, but supplies will still remain large. USDA economist Terry Townsend takes a look at the current cotton and wool outlook. Vic Powell interviews. (361)

"Middle East And North Africa"...USDA economist Michael Kurtzig focuses on the outlook for U.S. feed grain exports to the Middle East and North Africa. Vic Powell interviews. (362)

"Florida Citrus Industry"...Florida citrus growers John Kennedy and Bill Summerhill talk about the affects of the freeze on the citrus industry in Florida, and steps being taken to recover from that freeze. Vic Powell interviews. (363)

"55th National 4-H Conference"...Craig Scott, 4-H member from Towner, Colorado, talks about the theme of this year's National 4-H conference, "4-H - Building on Experience", and some of this year's objectives.

"4-H - Building On Experience"...Greater involvement of youth and adults in 4-H program development at all levels is one of the major objectives of this year's National 4-H Conference. Kimberlee Phillips, a 4-H member from Windsor, North Carolina talks about topics of priority concern in 4-H today. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (365)

HAPPY 50,
SCS!

On April 27, 1985, the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture completes a half-century of service to the U.S. and many other nations. Today, more than 2 million land users are voluntarily working to protect and improve their land as cooperators with nearly 3,000 conservation districts. Two out of every five acres of farmland are adequately protected against soil erosion. Conservation tillage is being adopted faster than any other practice in the history of farming. One out of every six counties in the U.S. enjoys flood protection and other resource benefits from small watershed projects. Soil surveys are completed on 1.7 billion acres.

DAIRY PROGRAM
REFERENDUM

The U.S. Department of Agriculture issued an order to hold a referendum among dairy farmers in the 60-day period beginning August 1 on whether the Dairy Promotion and Research program should be continued after September 30, according to Sec'y of Agriculture John Block. All dairy farmers who were engaged during April 1985 in the production of milk for commercial use will be eligible to vote. Details on the referendum will be announced at a later date.

1985 TOBACCO
SUPPORT
PROGRAMS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is seeking comments on the price support levels for the various kinds of eligible tobaccos, except flue-cured, for the 1985 crop year. Since there is an excessive supply of burley tobacco, the USDA recommends that the price support for burley be established at the minimum provided by law of \$1.788 per pound. USDA recommends the support level for the other kinds of tobacco be set within the range of 80 to 100 pct. of last year's levels. (For more information, contact Robert Tarczy, USDA, room 3736-S, Box 2415, Washington, D. C. 20013. Phone: (202) 447-5187.)

OFF MIKE

The Western Regional NAFB meeting is history, and it was a small but choice group of people who enjoyed 2-1/2 days of Utah hospitality. John Berg (KSL, Salt Lake City) is to be commended for the fine program he put together, including VIP treatment for those who stayed over, at the Sunday morning live broadcast by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. John, incidently, is a punster of the first order and had everyone groaning on more than one occasion. For instance he reported that a girl he knew was having trouble deciding whether to marry a dairyman or a poet. He said it was a case where the choice was for "butter or verse." See what we mean?...The NAFB's West National vice-president, Terri-Rae Elmer (KFBK, Sacramento, CA) was there and proved that she is versatile. We always hear that a lady's purse contains just about everything. Terri-Rae proved the point at an evening meal event when someone realized we had bottles of Utah wine (a new venture to gain more diversity in Utah agriculture) but no corkscrew. Terri-Rae dug into her capacious purse, produced the needed implement and saved the evening...Lynn Adair attended a couple of the events, too. Lynn was NAFB president in 1974 and currently is involved in real estate in Bountiful, UT...On other matters, we've learned that Jack McConnell (KOLT, Scottsbluff, NB) was awarded first place for the Best Farm Story by UPI Nebraska Broadcasters...And Lew Middleton (WQHK, Fort Wayne, IN) received a first place award for best agricultural reporting in the Metro Division of the Indiana AP Broadcast News competition. Our congratulations to both Jack and Lew. Nice going!! ...The NAFB Summer Meeting program planning committee met April 15, and we'll have more on that next week.


FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1455...(Weekly 13 min. documentary) Brenda Curtis talks with Agriculture Secretary John Block about some of the issues affecting farmers. The issues include exports, the Farm Bill and the budget.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1444...(Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; A wheat marketing quota?; The problem with exports; Another herbicide under scrutiny; Artificial potato battles bumps.

CONSUMER TIME #937...(Weekly reel of five 2-1/2-3 min. features) National Country Garden; Speeding Research to Consumers; The self starvation disease; "Lady," the inspector beagle; changing your home as you age.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE...Soviet Union agricultural outlook; Tues., April 30, Agricultural prices, Crop and weather update. There are no other regular USDA reports until May 6th when USDA releases the Livestock and Poultry Outlook. Dial the USDA National News Line 202/488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. EST each working day.



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Radio and Television Division